

MONTANA

Environmental Public Health Tracking

Volume 2, Issue 4, Spring 2006



We seek to identify and prevent health conditions that may be caused by interactions with and exposures to the environment. We seek to bridge the gap between public health and the environment through linked data, education, and collaboration.

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Education



Collaboration

Training and Technical Assistance: Important for EH Assessment Success

by Christine Deveny, EPHT Training and Technical Assistance Facilitator

Since 2003, EPHT has contracted with 17 county and tribal-level health departments for community environmental health (EH) assessments. Public health nurses, health educators, environmental health specialists, environmental engineers, registered sanitarians, and community health board members are among those who have led, or are lead-

ing these local assessment projects. Each has brought a different perspective and a different set of experiences, knowledge, and skills to their local projects. To insure that all the contractors have the capacity and capability they need to successfully carry out their assessments, EPHT has made training and technical assistance a priority.

EPHT provides its contractors with capacity

and skill building training on a variety of topics (see next page). The bulk of the training occurs at two-day long training events. The first event, held at the start of each contract period, orients the contractors to EPHT and the overall EH assessment process and helps them plan and organize their community work.

About three months later, EPHT hosts the second training event,

which focuses on building skills to carry out the key assessment project components. Experts engage the contractors using a variety of training methods to enhance learning. Once learned, these skills become relevant to all aspects of

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Training and Technical Assistance

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community-level public health work.

EPHT also provides the contractors with follow-up technical assistance through one-on-one "check-in" phone calls, group conference calls, site visits to contractor communities, email correspondence, and written guidelines and examples. EPHT's training and assistance is well received by the contractors (see sidebar) and is important for ensuring successful completion of the community EH assessments.



Training Topics

- ◆ Protocol for Assessing Community
- ◆ Lessons Learned From Other EH Assessment Contractors.
- ◆ Community Team Building
- ◆ Effective Meeting Facilitation
- ◆ Community Assessment Methodologies (surveys, community meetings, key informant interviews, focus groups, facilitated discussions)
- ◆ Survey Data Management
- ◆ Setting Priorities and Action Steps
- ◆ Effective Report Writing
- ◆ Public Health and EH Data Sources
- ◆ Digital Library (NRIS) Mapping Assistance

Comments from Contractors

- ◆ Keeping in touch through the trainings and conference calls gives more unity to the project. I feel we are working as a group and not just one county in the state.
- ◆ Very good ideas. So many more ideas than usually see at meetings.
- ◆ I needed to hear just this sort of speaker.
- ◆ Good networking, good presentations, good tools. I feel much more confident about our process and direction.
- ◆ The information was very helpful and related to what we are doing at our sites.
- ◆ On time-pertinent information - excellent reference material.
- ◆ You hit all of my expectations for a "good" meeting. Thanks!

Meeting of the Western Tracking Biomonitoring Consortium (WTBC)

This past March, the Western Tracking and Biomonitoring Consortium (WTBC), a collaboration of 12 western states and one Center of Excellence, met face to face for the second time.

Funded by CDC, the purpose is to integrate planning to fulfill the goals of the Environmental Public Health Tracking (EPHT) Program and the Rocky Mountain Biomonitoring Consortium (RMBC).

At this meeting, the group went through a process to establish priorities for future joint biomonitoring projects. We started writing a report summarizing the findings and process of the collaboration. The report, prepared for CDC, will identify if there are ways for these programs to benefit from further collaboration.

In order to take advantage of the gathering, the RMBC members stayed an extra day to meet for their usual quarterly meeting. Individual states reported on their biomonitoring projects, plans for new projects and timelines.

The next meeting of the WTBC will be held in June in Anchorage, Alaska.

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Program Manager
Rocky Mountain Biomonitoring Consortium

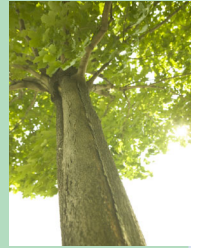
Christine Korhonen, MPH
Epidemiologist
Environmental Public Health Tracking

Cleaning Green

Article from: The Childrens Health
Environmental Coalition,
The CHEC Report, Issue 19, 2006.

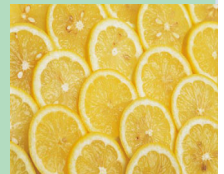
Common cleaners, ammonia-based cleaners, metal polishes, drain cleaners, floor waxes, etc., all may contain dangerous chemicals.

- petroleum distillates in metal polishes and adhesive removers can cause temporary eye clouding and long term exposure can damage the nervous system, skin, kidneys and eyes;
- phenol and cresol in disinfectants are corrosive and can cause diarrhea, fainting, dizziness and kidney and liver damage;
- nitrobenzene in furniture and floor polishes can cause skin discoloration, shallow breathing, vomiting and death, and are associated with cancer and birth defects.



There are a number of environmentally friendly products available that are effective and less toxic. But you can also use a number of ordinary products to clean – products that are in your cupboards:

- Baking soda (sodium bicarbonate). Neutralizes acid; deodorizes; extinguishes grease fires; cleans and polishes aluminum, chrome, jewelry, plastic, porcelain, silver, stainless steel and tin; softens fabrics; removes certain stains; effective as underarm deodorant and toothpaste. Mix some baking soda in warm water and put in a spray bottle to use as a cleaning agent. It may require a bit more scrubbing effort, but it is an effective cleaner.
- Lemon juice. Cleans glass; removes stains from aluminum, clothes and porcelain; lightens/ bleaches if used with sunlight.
- Vinegar. Dissolves mineral deposits; removes grease, traces of soap or wax buildup; polishes some metals; deodorizes. Vinegar can be used to clean glass, but not if wax deposits are present from other cleaners. To remove waxy buildup, add 1/2 cup of distilled white vinegar to 2 cups of water and 1/2 tsp of dish liquid. Put in spray bottle. Spray on glass surface, wait 30 seconds, and then remove with a clean rag. After the buildup is removed, you can use white vinegar to clean the glass.
- Borax. Deodorizes; inhibits mold growth; boosts the cleaning power of soap or detergent; removes stains; kills cockroaches when used with an attractant such as sugar.



Some other solutions:

- Celery. Absorbs odors when rubbed on cutting board.
- Citrus peel. Disinfects; deodorizes; fragrance; freshens air.
- Cream of tartar. Nonabrasive cleaner for porcelain, drains and metals.
- Salt. Abrasive, non-scratching cleaner (most surfaces) with anti-bacterial qualities.

2006-2007 Request for Applications

by Chris Korhonen, EPHT Epidemiologist

It's hard to believe that nearly four years have gone by and it's time to apply for EPHT funds again. A Request for Applications (RFA) for implementation funding has been released by CDC. The new cooperative agreement is very focused on development of the EPHT IT Network. Only sites who currently have EPHT funding are

eligible (24 cities and states). Only 15 will be funded.



Sites who receive funds must be able to transmit specific health and environmental data from a state network to CDC by September

2008. This application is due May 24th, so we have been busy getting letters of support from data providers and writing a tight application.

Two of the core national data elements required are from hospital discharge data. DPHHS is seeking a partnership with the Montana Healthcare Association (MHA). They gather dis-

charge data from a majority of the Montana hospitals. Core data EPHT elements required for 2006-2011 include: PM 2.5, ozone, water contaminants, asthma hospitalizations, acute myocardial infarction hospitalizations, birth weight, blood lead levels, short latency cancers, and birth defects.



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Upcoming Events

May 17th: AirToxics Under the
Big Sky Symposium.
www.umt.edu/cehs/AirTox.html

May 24th: EPHT RFA due

June 12-16: 5th Annual Montana
Public Health Summer Institute
[www2.montana.edu/confservices/
public_health](http://www2.montana.edu/confservices/public_health)

June 15-16: WTBC Meeting,
Anchorage, AK

July 15: EPHT funding sites
selected

July 31: Current EPHT funding
ends

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN MONTANA

Summary of the first Montana Partners Environmental Justice Workshop
April 10, 2006 ~ Rocky Mountain College, Billings MT



Environmental Justice Goals:

- ◆ Define environmental justice and environmental injustice
- ◆ Identify environmental justice issues in Montana
- ◆ Develop a network of interested EJ partners statewide

Partners:

- Rocky Mountain College's American Indian Affairs
- The University of Montana's Environmental Studies and Communication Departments
- EPA Region 8, EJ Office
- Montana-Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council
- Montana Migrant & Seasonal Farmworker Council
- Montana Department of Agriculture
- Montana Department of Environmental Quality
- Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services
- Students
- Advocacy Groups
- Citizens

Environmental Justice:

EPA Definition 1998

"No group of people, including racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic groups, should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local and tribal programs and policies."

Looking Ahead - Next Steps

- ◆ Share Contact Information
- ◆ Post information from the workshop on the web
- ◆ Schedule next meeting